DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 194 095 IR 008 962

AUTHOR Kies, Cosette N.
TITLE Public Relations for Brazilian Libraries: Process, Principles, Program Planning, Planning Techniques and Suggestions.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 23p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Foreign Countries: *Information Dissemination: *Library Extension: *Library Planning: *Publicity: *Public Relations
IDENTIFIERS *Brazil

ABSTRACT

A brief overview of the functions of public relations in libraries introduces this manual, which provides an explanation of the public relations (PR) process, including fact-finding, planning, communicating, evaluating, and marketing: some PR principles: a 10-step program that could serve as a model for planning a PR program: a discussion of PR planning techniques: and some PR suggestions for Brazilian libraries based on the author's observations and discussions with Brazilian librarians, library educators, and students. A list of 19 references is attached. (RAA)

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PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR BRAZILIAN LIBRARIES: PROCESS, PRINCIPLES, PROGRAM PLANNING, PLANNING TECHNIQUES AND SUGGESTIONS

by

Cosette N. Kies

Translated into Portuguese by: Jeanette Kramer

for: REVISTA DA ESCOLA DE BIBLIOTECONOMIA DA UFMG (BRAZIL)

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* Cosette N. Kies is an Associate Professor, Department of Library Science, George Peabody College for Teachers of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A. She was a Senior Lecturer under the Fulbright-Hayes exchange program for scholars at the Escola de Biblioteconomia, UFMG in 1979-80.

Public Relations for Brazilian Libraries: Process, Program Planning, Planning Techniques and Suggestions

SUMMARY

Public relations is a mutual communication process between an organization and its various publics which if planned, will provide understanding and support for that organization. Public relations could be used to a greater and more conscious effort in Brazilian libraries. This would result in a higher level of public awareness concerning libraries, their materials and services. By understanding the meaning, process, principles, planning and techniques of public relations, Brazilian librarians could increase public support through an improved public image of libraries. Suggestions for Brazilian libraries regarding public relations are included.

Public relations is an integral process within all organizations, including libraries. Although often confused with publicity techniques, it is an existing part of all organizations as a fundamental function. Public relations (PR) is the mutual communication process between an organization and that organization's various publics. PR as a planned, on-going program within an organization can be used to identify, analyze and mold public opinion about that organization and its purpose. Using that information about public information, it is possible for that organization, through its PR program, to respond to misconceptions, questions, and needed information in order to build public trust and support for the organization.

Many organizations and many libraries do not have a planned program of public relations, but every organization has PR, whether it is recognized as such or not. If that public relations program is not planned, then the image of the organization in the view of that organization's various publics may well be unknown, incorrect and, possibly, negative. Public relations is an unavoidable process in an organization, and as such, it could be planned and used constructively by the organization. To ignore PR as a process is futile, and perhaps dangerous, for its existence cannot be eliminated. Therefore, not to use it knowledgeably is to overlook a valuable resource for advancing the aims and objectives of the organization.

Part I: The PR Process

As an organizational process, public relations is generally considered to have four basic parts, or functions. These are:

1. Fact-finding
2. Planning
3. Communicating
4. Evaluating[1]

These four elements can be considered purely as sub-functions within the public relations process, but because of the integral nature of PR in the organization, they should be considered primarily in terms of their wider application within all functions of the organization as a whole.

In its fact-finding function, public relations can provide the organization with valuable information about public opinions and attitudes which may well give the organization understanding as to why its products and services are being purchased (or used) or not being purchased (or not used). In a profit-making organization, such as a manufacturing company, information of this sort can help bring about increased sales for the company, and illustrates why PR is usually considered a part of the marketing process in profit-making organizations. For a non-profit organization, such as a library, information regarding use can be vital in providing wanted services and materials, which in turn will bring about increased use, an improved image, and probably added support for the library.

As a planning function, PR efforts must be coordinated within the planning for the entire organization if efficient and effective consideration for future action can occur. The public relations plan needs to be part of the organization's plan so that the rationale for PR activities relates to the organization's objectives. For example, a library might be considering a rearrangement of library materials in a public area. A user study might well be conducted prior to this rearrangement in order to obtain suggestions for functional flow of material in relation to user convenience.

The communication function is concerned with internal communication for all employees of the organization, and with external communication for the various publics of the organization. In a library, it would be essential to keep all staff members informed about all policy changes, for example, for any member of the staff may be asked to interpret such policies at any time to non-staff members. External communication involves various messages sent to library users

and non-users, based on information gained about the various groups involved. The communication for both internal and external communication may be formal and/or informal communication. The essential part of this element is the absolute necessity to communicate frequently and appropriately with all concerned groups.

As an evaluation function, the PR process in an organization provides means by which that organization can evaluate its total productiveness, or effectiveness. The means by which a PR program evaluates itself along with the actual results of the evaluation provide the organization with important information about its public image. By using various techniques to be examined later in this article, an organization can learn information about the existing situation of image projection for planning purposes. For example, a library might determine that requests for a certain type of material are not as frequent as they once were. It may be further determined that this slacking off of requests is due not to lack of interest in the material but rather to lack of information about its availability by potential users who are new members of the library's community. In this case, rather than decreasing the purchasing of material of this type by the library, it would be far better to publicize its availability and possibly increase purchasing of this material.

These four parts of PR; fact-finding, planning, communicating and evaluating, operate in various ways in the practise of public relations. Some of these ways will be shown later in this article by the examination of a suggested model for a PR program for use in Brazilian libraries.

Marketing. In larger, primarily profit-making organizations the public relations process is itself a part of the larger organizational function of marketing. Marketing is the process of making a product, or service, desirable enought to purchase. This includes a variety of activities; product testing (based on extensive marketing and public opinion research), packaging, pricing, distributing, displaying, advertising, and the actual selling of goods. Such a process can also be applied to profit-making services organizations[2] and non-profit service organizations.[3] Because of this applicability and the extensive research which has been used in marketing, recent attention has been focused on the advisability of libraries using the marketing process as an enlarged PR program.

However, in most cases, it is advisable for librarians to first develop a solid public relations program before embarking on a more ambitious marketing process because of the need for considerably more specialized expertise in marketing

than is currently possessed by most librarians.

For All Libraries. Public relations for libraries is most often assumed to be a most suitable function for public libraries. Nevertheless, although the public library has traditionally used more PR techniques than other types of libraries, all libraries; including academic, school and special libraries, can profit by using a planned public relations program. Such a program will help libraries determine attitudes about the library concerned, identify library needs of users and potential users, and strengthen relations with current library users and higher authorities of the library. In spite of the supposed "captive audiences" of academic, school and special libraries, librarians in these libraries can increase understanding and support through PR. Research studies in public libraries which have used public relations over a period of years illustrate the definite relationship between the use of PR and high level financial support.[5] Academic, school and special librarians could well consider this justification for planning and implementing a public relations program for their libraries.

Part II: Some PR Principles

Certain fundamental principles of public relations need to be examined briefly before turning to the steps involved in planning a library PR program. These principles form the basis on which any PR program can flourish or flounder, depending on the adherence to these basic fundamentals.

First, and foremost, is the principle that although PR is considered a management function and must be coordinated at the managerial level, all staff members in any public service organization, such as a library, need to acknowledge the importance of PR and accept personal responsibility for that organization's public relations and public image. PR planning and policy-making are usually done at the managerial level, but it is the staff of the library which puts the actual program into practice.

Second, communication theory needs to be known, understood, remembered and properly used. Much of the PR process depends upon communication, both one-way (telling the library story) and two-way (listening and responding to public opinion about the library). Confusion in communication practice can be illustrated well by reading the passage in Jorge Amado's Tent of Miracles dealing with the Crocodile Rum Contest for school children.[6]

Third, the library concerned with planned PR should never forget the prime importance of public opinion and should constantly seek to learn and even influence

public opinion about the library.[7] Public opinion is constantly changing and needs to be sought out on a fairly frequent basis. The opinions and attitudes identified should be incorporated into the PR process with the idea that this constant change may cause frequent modification of any PR plan.

The fourth principle is the need to know and constantly analyze the library community.[8] The community might be a community in the formal sense, such as one served by a public library. The community involved, however, might also be an academic community, a school community, or a specialized community, and as such will be served by the appropriate type of library. Such analysis helps to identify target groups for informed communication and determination of public opinion held by special groups.

Fifth, the techniques of PR, publicity and feedback mechanisms, need to be used in an informed and intelligent manner. More is not necessarily better. Rather, the right kind of communication to the right group is usually more effective than enthusiastic, but unfocused, promotion scattered in all directions.

The sixth principle is to be truthful. A positive portrayal is always preferable to a negative one, yet the picture must be honest or the resulting image will be false. Any organization, including libraries, must be honest in its public relations efforts in order to generate and maintain public trust in the organization and its objectives.[9]

Seventh is the principle that through public relations an organization, or library, can bring about a heightened sense of accountability between the organization and its various publics. Through honest accounting for its expenditures and activities, a library can demonstrate its concern and responsiveness to the public good. In this fashion, a library which provides honest accountability is often the library which is deemed worthy of continued and increased financial support.

The final principle to be considered here is the need to use public relations to prevent problems, rather than to view it as a process for dealing with crisis situations alone. Although the value of a PR program cannot be denied in times of crisis, it should be used prior to the time trouble arises and perhaps avoid the problem altogether. Anticipation and prevention are vastly preferrable to explanations made after negative reactions.

These eight principles are vital to the construction and maintenanace of a responsible and responsive PR program. Librarians need to build these principles into their libraries' philosophies, as well as remember and use them in the practice of public relations.

Part III: A PR Program

A number of different models have been suggested for planning a library public relations program. Following is a plan which has been devised by the author of this article as one which would be possible to use in the majority of Brazilian libraries of all types, size and level of financial support. This ten-step program can be modified, of course, depending upon the particular situation involved, but the basic structure suggested here should prove to be workable in most Brazilian libraries.

1. Before any library program, including one on public relations, can be implemented, it is necessary to clearly identify and establish the broad and specific objectives of the library. Broad objectives, similar to goals in the U.S., should be the long-term aims of the library, reflecting that library's philosophy and raison d'etre. The specific objectives of the library should be obtainable aims which can be measured, or evaluated, at specified times.[10] Both kinds of objectives should include public relations aims of the library, in addition to those concerned with collection building, services, and programs.

2. Next, it is important to decide upon the standards which the library plans to use for all evaluative purposes. The standards may be specific ones, such as those endorsed by the American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology in the U.S.[11] or self-set ones, such as those currently being studied in the U.S. by the Public Library Association.[12] These standards should include statements dealing with public relations as well as quantitative and/or qualitative statements involving library facilities, staff, collection and services.

3. Following the decisions regarding overall library objectives and standards, it is important to assess the existing situation in regard to the library's current image. This may be done by observation, surveying, comparison, interviewing and gathering of statistics. For example, the following PR related information was gathered about six special libraries in Belo Horizonte early in 1980 by means of interviewing and observation. Three of the libraries were in the private sector and three were academic departmental libraries.

It can be seen that all the libraries involved used a variety of publicity and image projection techniques. Feedback mechanisms such as user surveys, community analysis and formal suggestion systems were usually limited to informal contacts. An examination of the existing PR situation in these six libraries, then, shows varying use of some commonly used public relations techniques, which

LIBRARY DESCRIPTORS	LIBRARY A	LIBRARY B	LIBRARY C	LIBRARY D	LIBRARY E	LIBRARY F
SIZE OF COLLECTION:						
NO. OF VOLS	2,000	2,3000	72,000	2,500	5,000	20,000
PERIODICALS	780	100	600	250	200	500
POPULATION SERVED	1,000	200	400	400	150	1,500
SIZE OF STAFF:						
PROFESSIONAL	5	3	13	1	1	4
CLERICAL	5	2	7	3	3	4
LOBBY SIGNS	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
LIBRARY SIGNS (IN LIBRARY)	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO
INFORMATION HANDOUTS	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
EXHIBITS/BULLETIN BDS.	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
ACCESSIBLE STAFF	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
ANNUAL REPORT FOR:						
SUPERVISOR/S	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
USERS	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
PRINTED LIBRARY GUIDE	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES
NEW MATERIALS LIST	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
BIBLIOGRAPHIC INSTRUC:						
PERSONAL	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
AUDIO-VISUAL	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
USER SURVEY DONE:						
INFORMAL	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
FORMAL	NO	PLANNED	YES	YES	NO	NO

TABLE 1.

Six special libraries and PR efforts in Belo Horizonte, MG, 1980. Libraries A, B, C are in the private sector and libraries D, E, F are academic libraries.

indicates different levels of conscious public relations knowledge on the part of the librarians. In each case, the librarians concerned could easily determine the particular library's existing situation by means of a simple checklist such as this, and gathering information about PR activities.

4. The next logical step in planning a library's PR program is to identify the strong and weak points of the existing situation. When that has been done, those points should be ranked in order of importance to the program in order to help establish priorities for PR activities. Care should be taken to consider some items which might be termed both strong and weak. For example, the special libraries shown in Table 1 might be considered deficient in not providing more formalized feedback mechanisms, such as suggestion boxes. However, the strong oral tradition inherent in Brazil also means that the informal way of gathering feedback is easy and could be considered a strong point. Weak points should be considered challenges to overcome and not insurmountable problems.[13]

5. Establish specific objectives for the library's PR program. In finalizing these objectives it should be remembered that these objectives should be reviewed and modified after a specified time period, and that strong and weak points of the existing situation will influence emphasis and activities. The specific PR objectives must be complementary and not contrary to the overall objectives of the library.

6. Realistic activities should then be formed which will bring about the achievement of the PR program's objectives. Grandiose, impractical schemes which must be continually postponed for lack of funds are useless. Rather, down-to-earth ideas which can be implemented as soon as possible will produce faster, more measurable (and more positive) results for the library. Strategies for the library's PR program need to be done, not just planned, therefore it is essential to decide upon activities which can be put into operation without lengthy delays due to insufficient time, staff, or funds to implement them.

7. Essential to the decision as to what constitutes realistic activities is the overall plan for timing, budget and evaluation techniques for the PR program. When a PR activity is done can be as important as why it is done, since success in some PR programs can be directly related to the time when certain projects were carried out. The full cost of projects needs to be determined as closely as possible in advance, since desertion of a project after it has started because of insufficient funds is not only wasteful, but contributes to a public image that the librarians involved are poor planners. By determining in advance

which evaluative techniques will be most pertinent and useful, enables and ensures the gathering of appropriate material during the course of the PR program.

8. The next step in developing any public relations program is in many ways the most crucial. This is the actual implementation of the program. All the fine plans in the world are meaningless unless they are put into effect. Public relations must be practiced, not just considered and planned. Unless it is actually done, the PR program has no purpose.

9. The evaluation of PR programs can be done in various ways. Most libraries with a formal PR program use a number of different techniques for evaluation purposes. Following are some of the various ways that evaluation of PR programs can be accomplished.

In all cases, analysis of the information gathered is the most essential part of the evaluation. In this way it is possible to see strengths and weaknesses of the program and determine where modification is needed.

Perhaps the most common way in which libraries evaluate their PR programs is through an examination of the library's treatment in the mass media. Newspaper clippings about the library, a record of mention on radio and television are all ways of seeing how a library is represented to the public at large. This, obviously, is a major influential factor in the formation of public opinion about a library and is one way to determine what the public image of the library is. The two major factors concerned with this type of evaluation are the amount of coverage and the attitudes expressed.

Another, perhaps more informal in its actual use, method of evaluation is the determination of what parts of the PR program can be termed successful and which are failures. It is human nature to take pride in success, but there is a tendency to ignore failure. In many cases, more can be learned from failure, and should be considered more carefully than the successes. In looking at a failure, one should ask the following questions:

What was the original intention of the program?
Why was the particular course of action selected?
What was done?
What were the results?
Why weren't expectations met?
What lessons can be learned from this experience?[14]

Another way to evaluate PR programs is to compare the real, or actual, results with what the expected results were. It may be that original expectations were too unrealistic, but it might also reveal that expectations were too low.

The final way in which libraries can evaluate their PR programs is through different types of surveys taken at various times during the course of the program. For public relations purposes, there are five different kinds of surveys that can be undertaken and can be helpful in the evaluation process. These are public opinion surveys, profile surveys, trend surveys, panel surveys, and in-depth interviews. The most commonly known type of survey, public opinion surveys, can be done with users and other larger groups, such as a sampling of an entire community. Profile surveys identify and examine characteristics of a selected group, such as library users. Trend surveys explore the potential possibilities of library and emphasize future use. Panel surveys, similar to consumer panels, examine attitudes by means of representation of a population on a panel, or boards. In-depth interviews can be done, obviously, with only a limited number of individuals, but can illustrate precise and more complex feelings and attitudes about the library more accurately. Surveys, as an evaluative technique for library PR programs, are underused at present, primarily because of the time and expense involved in their undertaking.

10. The final step in a library public relations program, as with all programs, is the decision making and future action based on the evaluation. These decisions should be related to the various activities which may be continued, discontinued, or postponed, and what aspects of the program should be modified and improved. In essence, the planners and evaluators of the PR program then return to the first step of this program and repeat the steps in order. In this way, the program becomes continuous, modifiable, and, hopefully, constantly improving. By following this series of steps librarians can be sure that the library's PR process is being monitored and carried out in a conscientious and professional manner.

Part IV: Some PR Planning Techniques

A wide variety of public relations activities are possible for libraries and have been written about in other sources.[15] These activities, or techniques, can be used in many libraries and need to be selected according to appropriateness and practicability for an individual library.

Rather than examine these techniques here, however, it would seem to be more useful for Brazilian librarians to examine certain PR planning techniques, since most Brazilian librarians need to pay attention to planning PR programs at this point. These planning techniques are the result of research and analysis, in some cases conducted by marketing and advertising research experts. Some of these techniques are particularly applicable and useful for libraries, and will

be examined in this article. These six planning techniques examined here are particularly useful during the initial planning stages of a PR program for consideration and application of some of these techniques can help in establishing a sound and excellent planned PR program from the very beginning.

One of the simplest planning techniques is to consider what sources are available for help in working with PR activities. These sources should include printed sources, such as books and periodical articles on public relations. In addition, people, particularly PR experts, should be listed as sources for help in establishing and maintaining a library PR program. These may be people in the immediate community who are willing to discuss a library PR program, or experts in other locations who may be consulted by telephone and/or correspondence. Other sources for PR help are a little vague. These include personal observation and research, and personal application of existing PR activities and programs in other fields which might be useable and good in libraries.

Another PR planning technique is to set up a publicity calendar for the library. The purpose of such a calendar is to show graphically what various activities are planned for various times and will help the librarian to spread activities over a long term. It will help avoid sporadic stabs at publicity and will assist in maintaining a steady flow of information about the library being made available to the public. Physically, such a calendar can be very large in size, but might well be set up as the example in Table 2. Usually, such a publicity calendar provides space for a full year's publicity activities, but the time periods can be established in any way by the library concerned.

ACTIVITIES	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	ETC.
Press releases								
Broadcasting								
Exhibits								
Booklists								
Programs								
Special Events								

Table 2
Publicity Calendar

Another PR planning technique involves public opinion, the basis for forming all PR programs. Whenever establishing a PR program, librarians need to analyze the existing situation, and one way to do this is by trying to determine public opinion about the library. One way to do this is to consider various, major groups who now use and are potential users of the library. For an academic library such a group might consist of students, faculty, staff. and occasional outside specialists. Each of these groups can be broken down into two sub-groups, users and non-users. The non-user groups can be further broken down into two more groups, potential users and unlikely users. The next stage is to try to determine what each group now thinks of the library. Then the librarian should decide what each group should think about the library. Lastly, possible ways of achieving this change in attitude need to be considered.

Another planning technique involves the selection of slogans. Advertising campaigns have long depended on slogans for success, and libraries have used them with some success as well. Advertising research has shown that three elements; interest, distinctiveness and believability, are the three most important factors in the success of a slogan and the resulting success of the product or service associated with the slogan.[16] Interest is the originality and attention-getting aspects of the slogan. Distinctiveness is the clarity of general image of the product or service, such as fun, exclusiveness, or femininity. Believability does not center on truthfulness so much as on whether or not it appears to be honest. Since group discussion, usually an advertising agency staff or committee, is often involved in the slogan selection process, the formalized consideration of the three elements involved are not always carried out, although informally there will usually be some discussion of the three factors of interest, distinctiveness and believability. How successfully a slogan can be used in graphic and mass media interpretation can sometimes determine the fate of a slogan and its "attached" product or service. Therefore, previous deliberation of possible slogans is useful in the final determination of a slogan for all advertising campaigns, including those of libraries.

Ten library slogans used at various times in the U.S. over the past twenty years by various groups were tested by six Brazilian postgraduate students in a class in library public relations held at the Escola de Biblioteconomia, UFMG in early 1980. The results of this test are shown in Table 3.

Each of the three elements involved, interest (I), distinctiveness (D), and believability (B), were judged on a scale of one (low) to five (high). The top ranked slogan was selected as first choice by three of the six students. Three

slogans, those ranked second, third and seventh were top ranked by one student each. Two slogans, those ranked fourth and sixth, were ranked in the middle range by all students. Four slogans, those ranked fifth, seventh, ninth and tenth, were so selected by one student each. The eighth lowest scored slogan was scored bottom by two students.

SLOGAN	COMBINED SCORES				RANK
	I	D	B	TOTAL	
KEEP GROWING - READ!	26	25	26	77	1
GET AHEAD - READ!	25	25	19	69	2
AREN'T YOU GLAD YOU CAN READ?	19	20	25	64	3
YOU'VE GOT A RIGHT TO READ - DON'T BLOW IT!	21	19	22	63	4
FOR A RICHER, FULLER LIFE, READ!	24	21	17	62	5
BE ALL YOU CAN BE. READ!	22	21	18	61	6
READING IS THE KEY!	20	21	19	60	7
FIGHT POVERTY OF THE MIND	14	15	23	52	8
GET IT ALL TOGETHER - AT YOUR LIBRARY	15	17	19	51	9
INFO TO GO!	18	13	15	46	10

Table 3.

Evaluation and ranking of library slogans by the factors of interest, distinctiveness and believability.

Since there has been no formalized evaluation of the degree of success for these various slogans other than the number of sales to libraries, it is not possible to relate the judgement of the students to the reception of the slogans by the public at large. However, such previous consideration might well help in avoiding slogans which might prove to be unsuccessful in attracting public attention.

The next PR planning technique to be examined here is the one centering around the selection of target groups, or audiences for various public relations

messages. Such selection should be related to the content of intended messages and the means by which the messages will be transmitted. A chart showing such a possible break-down was developed for school librarians in the most recent standards in the U.S. by the American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communication and Technology. It is shown in Table 4.[17] Such a break-down of audience groups, needed information and mechanisms for message sending might well prove to be very useful for every library.

TABLE 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

AUDIENCE	TYPES OF INFORMATION NEEDED	MEANS FOR PROVIDING INFORMATION
Students	Media center resources and program functions Ways of using media in reaching educational objectives Contributions of media to personal interests and goals	Displays, posters, news releases Media production Media presentations Personal contact Classroom visits Indirect contact through teachers Bibliographies Media packages
School Staff (faculty and administrators)	Media program goals and functions Ways of using media to achieve educational objectives Role of media in the total educational program Use of media to reach personal and professional goals	Memoranda, handbooks, information sheets Personal contacts and conferences Staff meetings Staff development programs on media utilization News releases Media production Media presentations Bibliographies Annual reports
Parents, Citizens, Board of Education, Other Public Officials	Media program goals and functions and their role in the achievement of overall educational goals Media program operations in relationship to the total educational program	News releases, radio and television coverage Media presentations Personal contacts Open house programs, public exhibits Budget justifications Annual reports
Media and Education Agencies and Associations	Media program goals and functions Program plans and activities as they relate to other agencies	News releases Annual reports Information sheets and handbooks Personal contact Participation in association activities Contribution to professional publications

Table 4

Audience identification and message chart for school librarians.

The final planning technique for public relations which can be helpful in some situations is the performance and analysis of information with communication audits. Communication audits are done by individuals in organizations in order to find out what information people are receiving, how they are receiving it, and whether or not they were satisfied with the way they received the information. In other words, a communication audit is a feedback mechanism which can be used in close association with the audience identification and message chart shown in Table 4. Communication audits can be done informally, but there are recent attempts to standardize the forms used for this purpose which can be adapted and used by librarians.[18] For example, a librarian can easily distribute a survey questionnaire which might ask if library users are aware of the presence of certain materials in the library, how they know about the materials, and whether or not they liked the manner in which they found out about these library materials. The librarian can then tabulate the results and discover whether or not a good, systematic approach to informing library patrons about library materials has been used.

The planning techniques and suggestions discussed here are but some ideas that can be used by librarians in preparing a planned program of public relations. An added feature, or advantage, to many aspects of these planning techniques is the fact that the performance of these techniques in themselves involve people in library activities and are in themselves valuable public relations tools. Whenever communication involving libraries takes place, the library PR process is being used.

Part 5: PR Suggestions for Brazilian Libraries

The following suggestions for public relations in Brazilian libraries are based on the author's observations and discussions with Brazilian librarians, library educators, and students; as well as visits to a number of different Brazilian libraries. Because of the author's nationality and work experience,

the suggestions have a definite American bias. However, they are offered with the idea that they may prove to be useful. Certainly, they should not be regarded as criticisms of the current Brazilian situation, nor should they be considered absolute requirements for any librarian considering a planned program in library public relations. Rather, they are ideas and suggestions offered by an "outsider" with the thought that such suggestions are often useful and sometimes can provide motivation in some cases.

One of the first things that should be done in most Brazilian libraries is to consider what is already being done in the various areas of library public relations. In other words, there is a vital need to assess the existing situation regarding Brazilian library PR. There are many public relations activities taking place, but there seems to be little information available regarding such activities. By finding out what is going on, it would be possible to incorporate such activities into larger, broader programs of library PR.

Another suggestion for Brazilian librarians is that there should be less total dependency on informal, oral public relations. Informal, oral public relations is a fine PR technique and one that is unquestionably of value in Brazilian libraries, but reinforcement of this oral PR by more formalized means would strengthen and provide more channels for public relations communication.

A problem with Brazilian public relations in general is the small number of librarians in Brazil. Because of this small group, the profession in general needs to improve its visibility and increase public awareness of libraries and librarians. This has a direct relationship to public opinion and awareness of libraries, which would seem to be quite low at this time. For example, rather than direct posters to librarians about library meetings,it might be more productive to have posters which inform potential users about the library and its services. Also, it might be helpful for librarians to become more actively involved in community activities as librarians, not only as private citizens.

In all publicity about libraries, it is good to remember that the best approach is not to tell everyone to use the library, but rather that libraries have been helpful and good for many people. Not everyone will want to use a library, and public awareness needs to be centered on the fact that libraries are fine organizations and worthy of support, even if they are not used by everyone.

There is a definite need for a strong national effort for publicity and public relations for libraries in Brazil. This is true in all countries of the world, but Brazil could profit greatly by such an effort at this time. With the high interest in improving literacy rates, improved education, and making a better life for its citizens, Brazilians need to be told now that libraries can be a crucial part of such movements and need encouragement and added support.

In individual libraries the librarians should consider diverting part of existing operation funds for public relations purposes. Rather than plead for extra money for this purpose which delays the implementation of a PR program, librarians need to be building strong planned PR programs now, rather than in some future which may never come.

Brazilian librarians also need to be reminded to look for positive solutions for problems in establishing PR programs. Rather than center energies on rationales for why a PR program cannot be initiated, it is better to concentrate on ways in which such programs can be started now.

Finally, there is a need for additional research, writing and interest on the part of librarians regarding library public relations. Ever since Sylla Chaves' publication promoting the great potential for PR in Brazil,[19] librarians in Brazil have not demonstrated any great inclination to follow this line of thinking. Although it is not too late to become involved in PR now, more delay simply means further development of uncertainty and frustration on the part of

librarians about Brazilian library futures. Public relations is a way by which librarians can knowingly and actively pursue a course which should provide a higher degree of acceptance of libraries by the public, give librarians important information about library needs and public desires concerning libraries, and possibly result in additional support for libraries, library materials and services. By using public relations, Brazilian librarians can play a greater part in determining the future of Brazilian libraries.

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